

# Religious Education Policy



Responsibility: Mrs Dawes

Approved on:

Signed:

Next Review Date:

# Nelson Primary School

## Religious Education (RE) Policy

### Our Vision for RE

At Nelson Primary School, we believe that Religious Education (RE) is essential in shaping compassionate and capable individuals who are empowered to make a positive difference in the world. RE enables pupils to explore faiths and worldviews, building empathy, respect, and moral reasoning while deepening their understanding of themselves and others.

Rooted in our school's vision and ethos—Compassionate, Capable, Community—RE gives pupils both the will to make a difference and the skills to do so. It supports our mission to nurture responsible, active citizens within a happy, inclusive learning environment.

RE is also an important vehicle for helping pupils appreciate the vibrant religious and cultural diversity of Birmingham. We ensure that children not only learn about world faiths but also develop a deep awareness of the religious communities, festivals, and traditions that shape our local city. As a school based in Birmingham, our curriculum prioritises understanding and celebrating the city's diversity and encourages pupils to consider how they contribute to this multicultural society.

### Curriculum and Dispositions

At Nelson, we follow the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for RE and have chosen to use Route 3 as our preferred model of delivery.

According to the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for RE (2022), Route 3 is specifically designed for schools with significant numbers of pupils from two or more religious traditions, where no single tradition is predominant. This route supports a balanced and inclusive approach to Religious Education, ensuring that pupils learn about a variety of religious traditions and non-religious worldviews without prioritising one over the others.

### Our Justification for Route 3:

- Route 3 offers a thematic, question-led approach which enables deeper enquiry and flexibility across different age groups.
- It supports the exploration of a wider range of religious and philosophical questions in a way that suits our diverse school population.
- The emphasis on dispositions, reflective practice, and moral development is a natural fit for our Three Cs ethos.
- Route 3 allows us to creatively integrate visits, stories, pupil voice, and community engagement into lessons that build from EYFS to Year 6.

**The Birmingham syllabus is built around 24 key dispositions—attitudes and behaviours that reflect the heart of religious traditions and moral living. These include:**

- Being Curious and Valuing Knowledge
- Being Fair and Just
- Living by the Rules
- Being Accountable and Living with Integrity
- Being Open, Honest and Truthful
- Being Courageous and Confident
- Expressing Joy
- Remembering Roots

We have enhanced this syllabus by embedding our own Three Cs values into every lesson: Compassionate, Capable, Community. Lessons are designed not only to meet the expectations of SACRE, but to exceed them through creative, inclusive practice rooted in our school's vision and community context.

### **3. Structure and Teaching of RE**

RE is taught weekly across all year groups, with additional links made during assemblies, theme days, and cross-curricular learning. In addition to a weekly half hour time slot, pupils receive an additional hour which replaces a science lesson at least once a half term.

Lessons are structured around a key question and Big Idea, followed by storytelling, discussion, role play, video stimuli, artefacts, and written or artistic reflections. Each lesson includes:

- **A Word Aware or similar activity introducing key vocabulary**
- **A link to prior learning and retrieval practice**
- **Reflection opportunities tying back to the Three Cs**
- **Links. Where applicable to Birmingham's religious communities, including festivals, places of worship, or people of faith**

**RE Journal Books:** Every pupil has a pink RE journal, which moves with them throughout their time at Nelson. These journals demonstrate progression in content, vocabulary, and discernment across the years. They provide a meaningful record of spiritual and philosophical growth, supporting our focus on reflection and thoughtful learning.

## **4. Inclusion and Accessibility**

We value the contribution of all pupils and ensure that RE is respectful of every child's background, belief, or non-belief. Many of our pupils bring lived religious experience into the classroom, and we view this as an asset to learning.

We are proud of our inclusive approach to RE. Lessons are adapted to meet the needs of SEND pupils through a range of targeted and universal strategies. We follow guidance outlined in our Ordinary Available Provision (**OPA**) document for RE, which supports teachers in planning for and responding to a wide range of needs across the four SEND categories:

### **Cognition and Learning**

#### **Challenges:**

- Conceptual understanding of key historical and modern-day religious practices
- Literacy difficulties impacting understanding of subject-specific vocabulary

#### **Provision:**

- Use of simplified visual activities and dual-coded resources
- Shorter, simplified texts using tools like Magic School/Chat GTP/Microsoft Co-Pilot
- Writing frames and TA/teacher support

### **Communication and Interaction**

#### **Challenges:**

- Language or communication difficulties
- Processing language in class discussions

#### **Provision:**

- Use of visuals, step-by-step instructions, and mixed-ability pairing
- Retrieval opportunities through low-stakes assessment
- Alternative ways to present/access work, including use of technology

### **Physical and Sensory**

#### **Challenges:**

- Difficulties accessing physical resources or visuals due to impairments
- Participation impacted by physical disabilities
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**Provision:**

- Careful seating and use of labelled visuals
- Planning for physical access and inclusive participation

**Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)****Challenges:**

- Low self-esteem or emotional distress impacting participation
- Topics such as loss or suffering may be triggering

**Provision:**

- Scaffolding, differentiation, and clear instruction
- Opportunities for safe expression of feelings
- Adaptations to ensure lessons are not overly distressing

**Universal Adaptations for All:**

1. Access to physical religious artefacts and real-life objects from different religions
2. Dual-coded PowerPoints and vocabulary support
3. Opportunities for class or group discussion to support verbal processing and inclusion

**5. Progression and Skills Development****Our RE curriculum fosters progression in:**

- Knowledge of world faiths, non-religious beliefs, and Birmingham's local communities
- Understanding of key religious stories, values, and celebrations
- Skills of comparison, reasoning, reflection, empathy, and discernment

**Each year group builds upon previous learning. Pupils develop the ability to:**

- Ask meaningful and increasingly philosophical questions
- Explore similarities and differences between beliefs
- Justify opinions using religious vocabulary and conceptual knowledge
- Reflect on moral and ethical ideas in relation to their own lives and wider society

## **6. Overview of RE Topics by Year Group**

### **RE Curriculum Topics by Year Group:**

**Year 1:** Special people, caring for others, courage, fairness (Christianity, Islam, Judaism). Introduction to Birmingham faith communities and festivals.

**Year 2:** Sacred sounds, Quaker worship, Buddhist silence, attentiveness, kindness, and belonging. Visits to places of worship in the local area.

**Year 3:** Honesty, truthfulness, remembrance (Judaism, Christianity), religious charity. Exploring religious charities operating in Birmingham.

**Year 4:** Rules for living, forgiveness and mercy, respect for sacred texts. Exploration of similarities between faith rules and our school expectations.

**Year 5:** Leadership, service (Mitzvah Day), equality, unity, stewardship. Pupils initiate small projects linked to improving our school and local community.

**Year 6:** Suffering, resilience, joy in religious expression, life after death (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism). Comparative theology and real-life case studies from diverse communities.

## **7. Religious Visits and Local Faith Engagement**

All classes at Nelson take part in an RE visit to a religious place of worship every year, usually in the autumn term. These visits are carefully planned to support pupils' understanding of sacred buildings and the communities that use them.

Before the visit, pupils are introduced to the key architectural features, customs, and expectations of the religious building they will explore. This builds both understanding and respect.

After the visit, pupils reflect in their pink RE journals, often comparing what they saw with what they have learned from stories, texts, or visitors. They consider how visiting a sacred place helped them understand the role of faith in people's lives and how it connects with our values of being Compassionate, Capable, and Community-minded.

**Throughout their time at Nelson, pupils build a rich understanding of Birmingham's religious communities through these visits:**

- **Year 1:** Visit to Birmingham City Church
- **Year 2:** Visit to a Buddhist Temple
- **Year 3:** Visit to Birmingham City Church and meet with a Humanist representative
- **Year 4:** Visit to a Synagogue

- **Year 5:** Visit to a Gurdwara (Sikh Temple)
- **Year 6:** Visit to a Mosque

By Year 6, pupils will have experienced a range of local places of worship representing Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, Islam, and non-religious worldviews, supporting their understanding of religious diversity and interfaith respect in our city.

## 8. Philosophical Thinking in RE

As pupils develop through the school, they engage with age-appropriate philosophical questions that promote deeper thinking and reflection. These questions are embedded across the RE curriculum and linked to the dispositions. Examples include:

- **Being Curious and Valuing Knowledge**  
 KS1: *Who made the world?*  
 KS2: *Can you believe something without seeing it?*
- **Being Fair and Just**  
 KS1: *What does it mean to be fair?*  
 KS2: *Should people always be forgiven?*
- **Living by the Rules**  
 KS1: *Why do we have rules in school and at home?*  
 KS2: *Should people follow religious rules even if they don't make sense to others?*
- **Being Accountable and Living with Integrity**  
 KS1: *Why is it important to say sorry?*  
 KS2: *Can doing the right thing ever be hard?*
- **Being Courageous and Confident**  
 KS1: *What does it mean to be brave?*  
 KS2: *Is it harder to be brave when you are alone?*
- **Expressing Joy**  
 KS1: *What makes you feel joy?*  
 KS2: *Can people find joy in difficult times?*
- **Remembering Roots**  
 KS1: *Why do people remember special days?*  
 KS2: *Why do religious people celebrate events from the past?*
- **Responding to Suffering**  
 KS1: *What should we do when someone is sad or depressed?*  
 KS2: *Why do bad things happen? How do people respond to suffering?*

These questions foster critical thinking, moral reasoning, and personal reflection, supporting our pupils' spiritual development and their ability to discern meaningfully.

## **9. Assessment and Monitoring**

*Progress in RE is assessed through:*

- Ongoing formative assessment
- Reflections and activities in pink RE journals
- Pupil voice interviews
- Learning walks and pupil book study /scrutiny

Evidence focuses on how pupils reason, reflect, and discern—not simply recall facts. The RE leader will monitor for depth of thought, vocabulary progression, and the ability to apply dispositions meaningfully.

## **10. Communication with Parents and Community**

RE is shared and celebrated through displays, class assemblies, newsletters, visits from faith leaders, and visits to places of worship in Birmingham. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from RE; however, we encourage all families to discuss this with the Headteacher first.

## **11. Conclusion**

RE at Nelson Primary School develops the heart and mind. It is a cornerstone of our ethos and supports our pupils to grow as thoughtful, compassionate, and capable citizens who shine—together. We are proud to deliver a curriculum that is both rooted in our city and outward-looking to the wider world.

**Policy Review Date:**

**Reviewed by:**

**Next Review:**

***For more information, contact the RE Subject Leader via the school office.***